CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.802
11 August 1998

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 11 August 1998, at 3.25 p.m.

President: Mr. Maimeskul (Ukraine)

GE.98-63133 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 802nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me first of all, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to extend a warm welcome to the new representative of Bulgaria, Ambassador Petko Draganov, and to assure him of our full cooperation in the discharge of his functions.

I am pleased to announce that following the intensive consultations which we have been holding for a number of weeks, the Conference is now in a position to take a decision on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for military purposes under agenda item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". The text is before you in all the official languages. May I take it that the Conference adopts this draft decision?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In connection with the decision we have just taken, I should like, in my capacity as President of the Conference, to state that the adoption of this decision is without prejudice to any further decisions on the establishment of further subsidiary bodies under agenda item 1 which may result from the provisions of paragraph 1 of decision CD/1501, and that the presidency will continue to pursue intensive consultations and to seek the views of the members of the Conference on appropriate methods and approaches for dealing with agenda item 1, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", taking into consideration all proposals and views in this respect.

(continued in French)

I would like to express my gratitude to all delegations for the spirit of compromise which they have displayed during the consultations, and which enabled the Conference to take a decisive step forward in its work. The decision we have just taken, as well as the statement I have just made, will be available as official documents of the Conference with the symbols CD/1547 and CD/1548 respectively. Intensive consultations are continuing with respect to the appointment of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee which we have just established, and I will inform the Conference of the result of those consultations at the next plenary meeting, with a view to a rapid decision.

I would now like to give the floor to delegations which have asked to speak following the adoption of this decision. I give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Ambassador Dembri, who will be speaking on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria) (translated from French): The Group of 21 has requested me, as the Coordinator, to make the following statement on its behalf.

"The G.21 emphasizes that nuclear disarmament is the highest priority for the Conference on Disarmament (CD). In order to promote the work of the CD, the Group underscores its flexibility in accepting the proposal to establish an ad hoc committee under item 1 of the agenda entitled 'Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament', to negotiate a convention on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. This gesture should be reciprocated by others through their agreement on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, as well as during the course of the negotiations to be conducted in the ad hoc committee which we have just agreed to establish.

"The Group of 21 stresses the importance of the elimination of the possibility of nuclear war and the threats derived from the continued existence of nuclear weapons, and the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

"The Group expresses its support for the President's declaration that in accordance with paragraph 1 of decision CD/1501, intensive consultations will continue with a view to reaching a decision on an appropriate subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament. The Group is of the view that these consultations should lead to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, and recalls the various proposals presented collectively and individually by its members.

"The G.21 believes that the proposed treaty dealing with fissile material must constitute a nuclear disarmament measure, and not only a nuclear non-proliferation measure, and be an integral step leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The treaty shall also promote international cooperation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

"Mindful that the achievement of nuclear disarmament requires urgent negotiation, the Group emphasizes the imperative need for all States to commit themselves unequivocally to the objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. An ad hoc committee should be established in the CD to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time, including a nuclear weapons convention.

"The G.21 believes firmly that a satisfactory solution to the issue of nuclear disarmament will have a direct bearing on the work of this CD in the future."

I have requested the secretariat to publish this statement as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

As I have the floor, and with your leave, Mr. President, I would like to make a statement in my capacity as representative of Algeria.

The Algerian delegation welcomes the decision which we have just taken on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on fissile material, and notes with satisfaction the subsequent statement by the President. It endorses the statement just made on behalf of the G.21. I wish to note on this occasion that Algeria has always considered that the CD should deal with item 1 on its agenda through the simultaneous creation of two negotiating mechanisms, concerned with nuclear disarmament and with fissile material. Today, one of these two steps has been taken. The second should not be long delayed. With respect to the work of the committee we have just established, the Algerian delegation hopes that it will faithfully reflect the spirit of the Shannon report and that no aspect of the negotiations will be neglected.

The Algerian delegation hoped for a more precise and clearer mandate with respect to stocks of fissile material, as is borne out in the wording to be found in part B of its proposal on this matter. However, it trusts in the good faith of negotiations and the advantages of multilateralism. That is why it associated itself unreservedly with this thrust towards the immediate commencement of negotiations under the mandate which can be most easily agreed upon. It considers that negotiations concerning stocks should not involve only an obligation to engage in the process but also an obligation to achieve results, the sole constraint being the rule of consensus, so that nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament can benefit fully. Within the framework of the ad hoc committee, stocks of fissile material should be the subject of focused, substantive and urgent negotiations on the same footing as future production, in order to arrive at practical results on a consensus basis.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, I had occasion in the statement I made before the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on 25 June to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. Today, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for the laborious efforts that you have undertaken in fulfilling your mandate. Thanks to your skilful guidance, the Conference on Disarmament was able to adopt a decision to establish an ad hoc committee under item 1 of the CD agenda, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", in order to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for the purpose of manufacturing nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

While endorsing the statement just made by His Excellency Ambassador Mohamed-Salah Dembri, Permanent Representative of Algeria, in his capacity as Coordinator of the Group of 21, my delegation would like to seize this opportunity in order to add a number of comments.

Egypt has made clear on many occasions its willingness to seek and support balanced solutions to deal properly with all issues before the Conference on Disarmament in an appropriate manner. The well-informed discussions we have had under your presidency have helped to build up a consensus and have enabled the Conference to reach agreement on starting

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

negotiations on a treaty banning production of the fissile material which can be used to produce nuclear weapons. The ultimate success of such negotiations depends on heeding the legitimate concerns of all sides.

Egypt was always in favour of starting FMCT negotiations as the first step in a phased programme for nuclear disarmament, stemming from our steadfast and continuing support for the cause of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation worldwide. To reach this objective, Egypt has contributed to numerous initiatives by the Group of 21 for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, including a concrete programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons which was submitted in document CD/1419 and presented to the Conference on Disarmament on 8 August 1996 on behalf of 28 countries members of the Group of 21. Egypt has further proposed a draft mandate for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament as contained in document CD/1453 dated 1 April 1997. This proposal presented by Egypt takes into account the diverse concerns of countries, as it calls for negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in order to free the world from these weapons, together with other weapons of mass destruction, as called for by President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak. As a step towards reaching this objective, the draft mandate proposed by Egypt provides for negotiations on a comprehensive treaty banning the production of fissile material in implementation of paragraph 4 of the decision on "Principles and objectives" of the 1995 NPT Conference under the section entitled "Nuclear disarmament".

However, in a spirit of compromise and good faith, Egypt has joined the consensus which permitted adoption of the decision on the establishment of an ad hoc committee under item 1 of the agenda, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", to start negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material which can be used for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This is to be done on the basis of the report presented by Ambassador Shannon and the mandate included therein.

While we welcome the statement that you have just read, Mr. President, and the intention of the CD presidency to pursue intensive consultations and to seek the views of the members of the Conference on Disarmament on the most appropriate methods and approaches for dealing with agenda item 1, in particular the other issues of nuclear disarmament, Egypt believes that nuclear disarmament must remain at the top of the CD's priorities, as it was accorded the highest priority in the Final Document of SSOD-I. The member States of the Conference on Disarmament must fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to them by the international community for pursuing the objective of full and comprehensive nuclear disarmament. In this context, I would like to refer here to the joint declaration issued on 9 June by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of eight countries including Mr. Amre Moussa, Foreign Minister of Egypt, and entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: The need for a new agenda", which calls on the Governments of each of the nuclear-weapon States and the three nuclear-weapon-capable States to commit themselves unequivocally to the elimination of their respective nuclear weapons and

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

nuclear-weapons capabilities and agree to start work immediately on formulating practical measures and enter into the required negotiations for the achievement of this objective.

I would like now to highlight some of Egypt's concerns regarding the negotiations on an FMCT. It is Egypt's understanding that the FMCT will neither replace the Non-Proliferation Treaty nor will it confer any degree of de jure or de facto international acceptance of the possession of nuclear weapons by any State other than the five nuclear-weapon States as defined by the NPT. Attempts to bend the principles of nuclear non-proliferation and apply them selectively can only have disastrous effects. I would like to stress once again the importance of achieving universal adherence to the NPT. With the exception of Israel, all countries of the Middle East region have acceded to this treaty. Israel's refusal so far to accede to the NPT endangers the unbalanced security situation in the Middle East and compounds Egypt's substantial concerns for its national security, as well as serious apprehension over regional security in face of the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East region. It also undermines the efforts deployed at both the international and regional levels aimed at establishing confidence-building measures, in particular the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as a crucial step towards implementing President Mubarak's initiative for the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the region.

While expressing support for the achievement of the twin objectives of a fissile material ban, namely nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, I would like to emphasize that this ban will not be effective if it is applied only to future production, for it must also include fissile material which has already been produced and which constitutes the stockpile of such material. Limiting the ban to future production only would represent no more than a limited non-proliferation measure with no real disarmament value. Egypt's position on this matter is reflected in the 1995 report of Ambassador Gerald Shannon, the CD'S Special Coordinator on the issue of a fissile material ban, in which he stated that: "Delegations were of the view that the mandate would permit consideration not only of future but also of past production". Hence the insistence of some States to exclude stockpiles from the scope of a treaty to ban production of fissile material is inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Nor does it in any way reflect the desire of the overwhelming majority of States for the earliest possible realization of complete nuclear disarmament.

It is imperative that the stockpiles of weapons-usable fissile material in any country should be declared and be subject to inspection and inventory under international supervision and control. Such a step should serve as the basis for any verification regime in the transitional period until such materials are converted to civilian purposes or destroyed. In the absence of verifiable inventories of weapons-usable fissile material, there would be no clear-cut way of ascertaining in cases of doubt or complaint whether the fissile material in question was newly produced or otherwise acquired by other means, such as transfer or purchase, for example, after the entry into force of the proposed treaty, or whether it had been produced or otherwise acquired

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

prior to that date. Naturally, declarations and detailed inventories of existing fissile material should represent only the first step in a series of measures to be agreed upon that should ultimately be subject to effective international control. To that end, we believe that the capabilities of IAEA need to be enhanced accordingly. All fissile material used to produce nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices should be placed under an updated comprehensive Agency safeguard mechanism.

In conclusion, these are some of the observations which the delegation of Egypt wished to place on record following the adoption of the decision on the establishment of an ad hoc committee under item 1 of the agenda. I conclude by expressing our sincere hope that the Conference on Disarmament will live up to its responsibilities as the only multilateral negotiating forum for global disarmament issues, particularly concerning the issues of priority to the international community, nuclear disarmament being the top priority.

Ms. KUNADI (India): Mr. President, we welcome the establishment of an ad hoc committee on FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament today and extend our warm congratulations to you. Let me also take this opportunity to welcome our new colleague, Ambassador Draganov of Bulgaria, in our midst today. With regard to this ad hoc committee, I wish to state the following for the record.

On 11 May, India stated its willingness to "participate in the negotiations for the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament". India has been fully supportive of the mandate contained in United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/75 L, a resolution which it co-sponsored. Our support for the mandate contained in this resolution was reiterated in 1995, following the adoption of CD/1299. While remaining ready to work on the basis of the mandate contained in CD/1299, let me make it clear again that India will participate constructively in negotiations for a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning future production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Mr. GOOSEN (South Africa): May I join my delegation to the welcome which has been extended to the distinguished Ambassador of Bulgaria?

My delegation supports, and is a partner in, the statement which has been delivered today by the Coordinator of the G.21, the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria. However, I have asked for the floor as a national delegation to additionally welcome the decision which we have just taken to establish the Ad Hoc Committee under item 1 of the agenda, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", which will be negotiating the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) on the basis of the Shannon report (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein. We also welcome the statement which you have made following the adoption of the FMCT ad hoc committee decision. The commencement and early conclusion of the FMCT negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament has long been an objective of the South African Government. The FMCT, as the next major multilateral negotiation, following

(Mr. Goosen, South Africa)

the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), is an integral part of the nuclear disarmament section of the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" adopted at the 1995 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review and Extension Conference. In the joint declaration made in Cape Town by President Nelson Mandela and the then Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Right Honourable Mr. James Bolger, on 6 August 1996, almost exactly two years ago, they stated:

> "We also reaffirm that, following the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) text through multilateral negotiations, our Governments intend to sign the Treaty at the earliest opportunity. Our delegations to the Conference on Disarmament will work actively to support the Chairman of the negotiating committee in his endeavour to resolve the difficulties which the Conference is presently considering with regard to the Treaty. We call on all other countries to give their prompt support to the Treaty. Looking ahead, we confirm that our Governments will work for the commencement next year of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons."

The decision which the Conference has taken is a fulfilment of this call.

South Africa sees the negotiations of an FMCT as being of particular importance given the key nature of fissile material as a component of nuclear weapons. From our perspective the negotiations which we are about to commence lie at the heart of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation issue. By achieving control over fissile material for weapons purposes we will not only be in a position to prevent the production of further nuclear weapons, but we are also in a position to lay the groundwork for their eventual elimination. South Africa's approach to the negotiations for an FMCT will be based on the objective that the treaty to be negotiated must be an integral measure of both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. While recognizing the difficulties which surround the issues relating to existing military stockpiles of fissile material, it is our intention to raise the stockpiles issue, as is provided for in the Shannon report, and will, together with the other members of the Conference on Disarmament, seek the most appropriate ways of dealing with the matter.

As I stated during the informal consultations which preceded this plenary, several members of the Conference on Disarmament posed the question to my delegation, both in private and publicly, when debating the South African proposal contained in document CD/1483 for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament: "What about the FMCT?" It is our view, and with our strong support, that this question has now been answered with the establishment of the ad hoc committee to negotiate an FMCT without any so-called "linkages". The question can now rightfully be posed to those who had previously raised the issue: "What about nuclear disarmament?" Having taken the decision on the FMCT, is the time not now also right to take a decision on a subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament where we can deliberate on the nuclear disarmament issue? We believe that the questions which my delegation has just raised are important and should not be ignored.

(Mr. Goosen, South Africa)

I am therefore under instruction to request that you, Mr. President, should convene a meeting of the informal Presidential consultations on agenda item 1, in accordance with paragraph 1 of decision CD/1501 and the Presidential statement contained in CD/1500, in order that the Conference can take this matter up as a matter of urgency, and in order that we can see whether it is also not possible to take a decision soon - perhaps even at our next plenary meeting - on how the CD will be addressing the nuclear disarmament issue.

Mr. DRAGANOV (Bulgaria): Mr. President, may I first congratulate you on the quality work that the Conference on Disarmament has been doing under your presidency and assure you of my full cooperation in the exercise of your duties?

As the newly appointed Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bulgaria to the United Nations Office and the other international organizations in Geneva, I would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, his deputy, and all the staff, as well as the members of the Conference, for the warm welcome extended to me since my arrival. I look forward to working with all of you on the important tasks that face us.

The establishment of an ad hoc committee under item 1 of the agenda will contribute a long way, I am sure, to the fulfilment of these tasks and will enhance the image of the Conference as the most effective multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament. I believe congratulations are in order.

Let me use this opportunity to inform you that on 29 July 1998 the National Assembly of Bulgaria ratified unanimously the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. This decision represents our willingness to contribute to the efforts of the international community to eliminate totally and for ever these weapons. It is also a confirmation of our formal position that Bulgaria does not consider any of its neighbours as potential aggressors and does not expect a military incursion on its territory. The early ratification of the Convention demonstrates my country's new approach to national and international security with a view to our full integration in the Euro-Atlantic security structures and the European Union.

Bulgaria's decision has been in the making for a long time now. In 1990 our production of APLMs was suspended. We signed the 3 May 1996 amendments to Protocol II, annexed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. In May 1996 Bulgaria introduced a three-year moratorium on the export of APLMs and in December 1997, the Government decided on an indefinite duration of that moratorium. Unilaterally, Bulgaria has undertaken clearing its anti-personnel minefields laid in the years of the cold war. Work on specific programmes for the elimination of existing stocks and clearing of mines started long before the ratification of the Convention.

(Mr. Draganov, Bulgaria)

Bulgaria backs every effort of the international community in finding ways for a comprehensive and universally supported decision to the APLM problem and we urge all countries to do the same. That is why we appreciate the endeavours of Ambassador John Campbell of Australia, who continues, as a Special Coordinator, his consultations on APLMs. A decision to establish an ad hoc committee under agenda item 6 to negotiate a ban on the transfer of APLMs, we believe, could make important progress towards the ultimate goal - the total elimination of these weapons.

Mr. AL-HUSSAMI (Syrian Arab Republic) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, I would like to commend you for the continuing success that you have achieved as President of our Conference.

Our delegation, as you know, is a member of the Group of 21. For that reason, our delegation fully supports the statement made by His Excellency Ambassador Dembri, on behalf of the Group. Allow me to express our great esteem for the delegation of Algeria for the splendid success achieved by that delegation as Coordinator of the Group of 21. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Draganov, the representative of Bulgaria, and I hope that we will cooperate in a productive manner in this Group.

Our country's position is well known concerning the items on the Conference's agenda including the item relating to the production of fissile material for purposes of nuclear armament. Nevertheless, the decision which we have just taken is of such importance that it is absolutely essential to stress once again that the world was not born yesterday and that we are sitting on a fearful stockpile of fissile material which has accumulated as a result of the deceitful respect for the instruments on nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. This alarming stockpile of fissile material could be used to manufacture thousands of nuclear bombs and promote nuclear proliferation instead of preventing it. It could also accelerate the, nuclear arms race instead of putting a stop to it. Today's reality is the outcome of the world being divided into a handful of nuclear-weapon States with no commitment to anything on the one hand and the rest of the world which is committed to everything on the other. This is the reality which we have to confront as any treaty for the cessation of the production of fissile material would be discriminatory if it forgot the past and present and addressed only the future.

To illustrate the seriousness of this reality, it is enough to recall the statement made by the representative of Israel at the close of last Thursday's meeting in which he admitted that mere agreement to establish an ad hoc committee would affect Israel's security. On 7 August, the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz reported that Israel had sought guarantees from the United States of America that its nuclear capabilities would not be affected if it agreed to cease production of fissile material for military purposes. It also sought guarantees that its nuclear sites would not be inspected if it were to accede to such a treaty. What does all of this mean? Does it not affirm that Israel has produced fissile material for nuclear purposes, and is

(Mr. Al-Hussami, Syrian Arab Republic)

continuing to do so, that it is determined to continue future production of fissile material for purposes of nuclear armament and that the ambiguous nuclear policy which it has follows is now obsolete?

Do you not think that it is high time to ask Israel with firmness and determination to respect the will of the international community and abandon the nuclear option. Or do you think that the Arab region should continue to be exposed to permanent Israeli nuclear threat and the Israeli nuclear explosion which must be approaching in view of the arrogant policy of the leaders of Israel that rejects a just and comprehensive peace in the region?

Mr. SOUTAR (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): May I first of all join previous speakers in welcoming to our midst the Ambassador of Bulgaria, Ambassador Draganov, and assure him of our readiness to work closely together with him in this forum?

Mr. President, I have asked for the floor in order formally to register, in common with previous speakers, my delegation's warm welcome for the decision which the Conference has just taken to establish an ad hoc committee on a fissile material cut-off treaty. In doing so, my delegation would wish to associate itself with the tribute which others have paid to you for your efforts to promote this outcome. The United Kingdom has long been committed to the conclusion of an FMCT. This commitment was set out in particular in the "Principles and objectives" agreed at the NPT Review and Extension Conference in April 1995, and in our national statement at the same time that the United Kingdom had ceased all production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Since then, as I had the opportunity to remind the Conference at our plenary meeting on 30 July, the United Kingdom has taken a number of further significant steps down this road. The United Kingdom deeply regretted that, despite the agreement in this body in 1995 to establish an ad hoc committee on an FMCT, the start of negotiations had continued to elude us. They are now long overdue. My delegation, for its part, looks forward to working intensively in a constructive and cooperative spirit to bringing these important negotiations to an early and fruitful conclusion.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): Before making my statement, I would also like to use this occasion to welcome our new colleague from Bulgaria, Ambassador Draganov, and certainly he will understand that Canada particularly welcomes the news that he brought to this Conference today.

In the warm afterglow of the decision we have just taken - thanks in no small part to your efforts, Mr. President - we would like to make a few observations. These observations obviously build upon our earlier interventions before this Conference in the past few days as well as earlier during this session.

As everyone knows, Mr. President, our proposal for an addition to your Presidential statement has caused you, and we understand indirectly some others, some difficulty. We also wish to express our deep appreciation for the support given by some members of this Conference to that proposal. In

(Mr. Moher, Canada)

pursuing it, we have emphasized the importance that we attach to the language while noting, both formally and informally, its even-handedness from our perspective and the fact, again from our perspective, that in our view it introduces nothing new to the FMCT debate.

Therefore, at this point, and after the decision has been taken, we would wish to put our proposal and its rationale on record. Our proposal, as everyone recalls, was that in your statement the following phrase should appear: "There is a general understanding that both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament objectives will be taken into consideration during the work of this ad hoc committee". I want to emphasize that we did not emphasize one or the other of the objectives but called on a recognition that both would be taken into consideration, leaving it to the negotiations to decide how and when. We also emphasized that that language was to be inserted on the basis of consensus. And while there was very wide acceptance of the language, we regret that in the final analysis it did not find the consensus that we hoped that it would. Therefore, I would like to briefly outline the rationale for this because there have been a number of exchanges which I think need to be brought together.

The roots or origins of the FMCT concept go back as far as December 1946, and certainly Canada has been directly and actively committed to it since at least the mid-1950s. This commitment over the years led eventually to my predecessor, Ambassador Gerry Shannon, taking on the task of being Special Coordinator in 1994, and it would be irresponsible of me not to, at this point, express the very great pleasure that we have been able to participate in this decision today to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate an FMCT on the basis of Ambassador Shannon's report and the mandate contained therein. It is certainly equally our fervent hope that we will begin our work on this treaty immediately and then recommence briskly in 1999. We have an urgent, complex and demanding task before us, and we should not allow any time to be wasted.

But as already noted, these negotiations will be complex, with many political and technical issues to resolve. While the resolution of those issues will obviously have to take place in the negotiations themselves, there are some basic considerations which we will need to bear in mind as we proceed, and I wish to mention only two at this point.

First, we will need to be clear as to our "conceptual scope", that is: What concerns are we trying to address and how? Canada's answer to this is quite clear. As early as 1957, we stressed our objective was to deal with "all future production of fissionable material [to be] used under international supervision, exclusively for non-weapons purposes". While the world has moved on since 1957, for better and for worse, Canada's basic objective has not changed. Thus we will want to ensure that pursuant to the Shannon report and mandate, we will deal in our FMCT negotiations with nuclear disarmament and arms control objectives as regards those five nuclear-weapon States recognized as such by the vast majority of the international community through the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Moreover, we will equally wish to ensure that we deal in these negotiations

(Mr. Moher, Canada)

with nuclear non-proliferation objectives as regards those States which for various reasons have remained outside the NPT regime. And, as detailed in our decision, we must do so in an overall non-discriminatory way: an exceptional challenge indeed, and one with regard to which Canada will be particularly vigilant. Our central point at this early stage is to register our firm resolve to ensure each of the above dimensions - without confusion between the two - is clearly registered. Those two dimensions, that is, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation with the clear distinction between them, are, after all, at the heart of our current international nuclear security paradigm - and Canada is not, and will not be, prepared to see that paradigm redefined through an FMCT negotiation. Within this conceptual framework, Canada, for its part, will continue to insist that we address "all future production of fissionable material" wherever it is, drawing on the relevant conceptual dimension in doing so.

Turning to the second point, let me again return to 1957. In that year, we supported a paper calling on "the parties to undertake to provide, under international supervision, for equitable transfers, in successive increments, of fissionable material from previous production to non-weapons purposes". That is, the issue of stocks was also to be dealt with appropriately. We are all aware of how this matter was managed in the Shannon report; we have also seen further suggestions in this Conference as to how it should be considered. Canada, for its part, made its position again clear last January. In paragraph 5 of our working paper (CD/1485) we recognized that this matter is not included within the specific scope of the FMCT negotiations. At the same time, we emphasized that those States concerned, i.e. those with fissile material usable for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive purposes and which material is not subject to IAEA safeguards, should pursue appropriate measures designed to reduce such stockpiles and/or to place declared excess material under IAEA safeguards with a view to their elimination. We have been encouraged by steps taken by the United States of America and the Russian Federation to deal with this question; we welcomed, in our 25 June statement to this Conference, an indication by Secretary of State Albright that further progress is to be pursued; and we also strongly welcome the moves to be taken by the United Kingdom as outlined by Ambassador Soutar in his statement to the CD on 30 July. We look forward to further progress by those States as well as an indication by the other nuclear-weapon States of their intentions to engage in similar reductions as part of a continuing process. Let me be very clear in this respect. Canada is among those States which, while recognizing that direct negotiations on stocks are outside the CD's specific mandate in an FMCT ad hoc committee, do believe that substantive progress in dealing with production prior to the entry into force of any FMCT will be critical for the optimal viability, credibility and effectiveness of that treaty. This is so for the stocks of the nuclear-weapon States from a disarmament perspective; it is also so for those of non-NPT States from a nuclear non-proliferation perspective. We will continue to press this point of view.

(Mr. Moher, Canada)

One further observation. Progress of these negotiations, now and in the future, would be enhanced by an immediate moratorium on production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive purposes. Canada urges all of the States concerned to commit themselves now to such a moratorium.

Turning to nuclear disarmament, it would be remiss not to address this theme given the decision that we have taken today. Canada's strong condemnation of nuclear testing in South Asia and our commitment to an effective FMCT negotiation do not in any way detract from our continuing desire to see established in the CD an appropriate mechanism to deal with nuclear disarmament according to an agreed mandate. We addressed this in our 25 June statement during which we again renewed the proposal we put forward in January this year. The recent very welcome statement by Ambassador Soutar, with the wealth of information contained therein, has only served to whet our appetite for an appropriate mechanism in which we could enter into a substantive dialogue on such developments. It is Canada's fervent hope that the envisaged summit this September between the United States of America and the Russian Federation will provide further promising developments as regards the START process. All this, and other developments, are valuable grist for substantive discussion in this Conference.

We have noted, Mr. President, that in your statement today, the presidency has pledged to continue to pursue intensive consultations in this respect. The Canadian delegation welcomed the recent opportunity it had to review this matter with the presidency and looks forward to the early culmination of those consultations with a positive result. This is particularly so as we approach the end of this year's session of the CD and the necessary preparation of our annual report.

Both our decision to negotiate an FMCT and Canada's proposal for appropriate work in the CD on nuclear disarmament obviously relate to much larger issues and challenges currently before the international community. In that context, Canada has listened with great attention to two recent interventions in this Conference, one by Ambassador Akram of Pakistan, the other by Ambassador Kunadi of India. Both of those interventions were serious, well considered and highly professional in nature. They merit the most careful and thorough study by us all. Certainly we find much of the analysis in each to be both thought-provoking and provocative! We hope that we will be able to engage in a thorough examination of those interventions in this Conference. But we do wish to emphasize now, today, one basic consideration so that any delay in a more considered discussion of those papers or those presentations is not misinterpreted in any way. In a recent highly articulate newspaper piece the assertion was made that "the international nuclear security paradigm [must] be reviewed or ... be made more inclusive" and that "the present model of nuclear non-proliferation based only on differential standards of security is not viable". In that respect, Canada wishes to emphasize, as we did on 25 June, that for us we continue to consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the NPT, as the essential foundation and the indispensable instrument upon which the international nuclear regime, both in its nuclear disarmament and in its

(Mr. Moher, Canada)

nuclear non-proliferation dimensions, is based. As such, it will come as no surprise that that Treaty does indeed establish "the ground realities" as we approach nuclear issues in this forum or in any other. Certainly, it is in that light that we have interpreted paragraph 4 of the P-5 joint communiqué here in Geneva on 4 June, and on that basis that Canada associated itself with the G-8 Foreign Ministers' communiqué (especially paragraph 7 thereof) on 12 June. These are not just words to us, to be uttered rhetorically and then to be ignored in reality. It is from that perspective that we will continue to participate in the further elaboration and negotiation of nuclear issues in this Conference.

Mr. BOUCHAARA (Morocco) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your accession to the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to thank you for the outstanding job which you have managed to accomplish. Allow me also to extend a welcome to Ambassador Draganov of Bulgaria.

I wanted to take the floor briefly to say that my delegation is very satisfied that the Conference, after a short period of disorientation, is taking the path towards what will probably be the most important negotiations in the area of multilateral disarmament at the end of this century. The re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the FMCT will make it possible to begin negotiations speedily in this forum. These negotiations will show the entire international community that the Conference on Disarmament plays an essential role for the preservation of international peace and security. These negotiations on the FMCT will also place nuclear disarmament at the centre of the concerns of this body, and this is a matter of tremendous satisfaction for my country, which has constantly reiterated its firm support for the principles of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Today, my delegation pays tribute to the delegations in the Group of 21 which have once again shown a spirit of flexibility. Without the contribution of the Group of 21 and its desire to enhance the decision which you have just adopted by adding to it refinements which are essential for the future of the negotiations, we would not have reached such a spectacular result in record time. I would venture to hope that, during the negotiations that will soon begin, all opinions, including those of the Group of 21, will be taken into account and that all delegations will display flexibility similar to that of the Non-Aligned so that we can draw up a balanced, just and fair treaty.

Mr. CAMPBELL (Australia): May I also join other speakers before me in welcoming Ambassador Draganov to the CD? He has arrived at an auspicious time.

Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on the way in which you have steered the Conference through to the adoption of this historic decision. The idea of a ban on the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons goes back to the earliest proposals for multilateral arms control measures in 1946. Over half a century later, we have now taken the first concrete step towards the realization of this idea.

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

The cut-off treaty is a long-standing Australian Government non-proliferation and disarmament objective towards which we have worked for many years. Australia warmly welcomes the decision adopted by the Conference to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate this treaty. This decision is important not only for the security benefits it will ultimately bestow when the treaty is completed, but also, finally, it gives effect to the second of the three elements of the programme of action under the decision on "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" adopted by the States parties to the NPT at the Review and Extension Conference in 1995. Moreover, it will enable the international community to move forward constructively beyond the adverse events of May this year, in order to build a stronger and more robust non-proliferation and disarmament regime which responds to the security imperatives of all States. The decision is important because it reflects a recognition by all member States of this Conference that launching negotiations on an FMCT is in our common best interests and that it is the right and appropriate signal for us to send to the world today.

As the country responsible for convening the Canberra Commission on the elimination of nuclear weapons, Australia is pleased that concrete action is being taken today to take forward one more of the essential reinforcing steps recommended by the Commission.

We have no illusions about the task before us. We expect long and hard negotiations. They will be long and hard because we expect them to engage the vital national security interests of the member States of this Conference, for without such engagement, arms control treaties will not contribute to improving international, regional and national security. By participating in the adoption of this decision, Australia signals its willingness to join with other member States of this Conference to negotiate, in good faith the best possible treaty we can achieve.

Mr. KREID (Austria): Mr. President, you have secured a prize which has eluded the efforts of a large number of colleagues who preceded you in the presidency. We congratulate you wholeheartedly and express our appreciation for the skilful and professional manner in which you conducted our complex negotiations.

To Ambassador Draganov of Bulgaria we bid welcome. He chooses a good moment to join us.

Austria is very pleased with the result we have achieved. When, on 3 February of this year, we tabled our draft decision CD/1492, the chances of obtaining early agreement in the Conference seemed remote. Indeed, to some delegations our initiative appeared either out of touch with reality or too simplistic or else premature. We considered their arguments and decided that the risk was well worth taking. On that occasion I stated: "To disdain the chance of achieving a contractual agreement in an area of vital interest to all of us appears unreasonable. More so, it is irresponsible."

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

Today, I am happy to be able to say that reason has prevailed and that the Conference has lived up to its responsibility. We are at the beginning of a long and arduous way. We have no cause for triumphalism but we have cause for optimism. When you embark on a journey partly leading into uncharted territory, you muster all your energies and you are filled with a sense of strength and expectation. This is what is happening right now to us here in the CD. We muster new energies, we gather strength for this exciting period ahead of us. Let me assure you, Mr. President, that the Austrian delegation stands ready to make its contribution to this process with a view to bringing us one step closer to a world free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. KHORRAM (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating you on your assumption and in particular, your success as the President of the CD in adopting this decision. I would also like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Petko Draganov, the new Ambassador of Bulgaria to this Conference.

After the conclusion of the CTBT at the Conference on Disarmament, the international community rightly expected the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. To that effect, various propositions were made, but unfortunately to no avail. A few nuclear-weapon States have decided to block any progress towards genuine nuclear disarmament. For them, non-proliferation is the ultimate objective. This policy has led some people to believe that the regime is discriminatory. It has also encouraged some countries to conduct nuclear tests in recent months.

As a result, the non-proliferation regime has suffered significant setbacks. If sincere actions in nuclear disarmament are not taken, the non-proliferation regime will barely survive. Let us not lose this opportunity, for we might regret it for ever.

The Conference on Disarmament has just decided to establish an ad hoc committee under item 1 of its agenda. The Islamic Republic of Iran decided to go along with the decision on the basis of the Presidential statement and the statement of the G.21 and on the understanding that the work of the Ad Hoc Committee will be equally guided by the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard, I support the initiative which was raised in this plenary by the distinguished representative of South Africa.

All along, we have insisted that the fissban negotiations should address past and future production of fissile materials. Leaving out fissile material stockpiles would only legitimize the possession and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. As reflected in the Shannon report - the reference to which in the draft decision helped us to join the consensus on this issue - the mandate for the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee also includes negotiations on past fissile material production.

Moreover, after the conclusion of the FMCT, no fissile material, nuclear programme or facility should be allowed to remain outside international safeguards.

(Mr. Khorram, Islamic Republic of Iran)

The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that the conclusion of the FMCT should provide for the promotion of bilateral and international cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, in that it would address possible concerns over its proliferation.

Removing the threat of nuclear attack is still the most acute and urgent task of the international community. We also believe that this treaty should reduce the possibility of nuclear war and the threats derived from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and should provide for the prevention of the qualitative development of nuclear weapons.

We sincerely hope that the FMCT will also promote the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East region, as a genuine step towards a world free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. GREY (United States of America): I should like to join with other colleagues in welcoming Ambassador Draganov. As our Austrian colleague pointed out, he picked a good day to come.

Mr. President, the burst of applause which took place when you gavelled this thing through was, I think, an expression of a sense of relief amongst a number of us, that after 40-odd years or so we finally got to this decision. It was also a tribute to your very, very good skills in handling this venture into the future, and I must say that, for my part, I have never seen a gavel come down so fast in my life. You are faster than Clint Eastwood, Sir.

The United States welcomes the decision to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate, on the basis of the Shannon report and the mandate contained therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. An FMCT is a high priority for the United States and we are encouraged that the CD has taken this important step, which will have significant benefits as both a nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measure.

I will not review the United States' substantive approach to FMCT negotiations today. Our position has been the subject of more than one United States statement in this body over the past four years, most recently on 26 March, and there will be opportunities in the near future to address FMCT in more detail. My delegation looks forward to the forthcoming negotiations and offers its support and cooperation in getting this long-delayed enterprise off to an expeditious start.

Since the conclusion of the CTBT negotiations, the CD has been discussing which issues are ripe for negotiation. Now that we have decided to move forward on FMCT, I hope that we can also reach a decision to negotiate a transfer ban on anti-personnel landmines.

Mr. LAMDAN (Israel): Like others, let me welcome Ambassador Draganov of Bulgaria to this forum. We look forward to working with him here and in other United Nations forums in Geneva. Israel shares in the significance of the

(Mr. Lamdan, Israel)

moment. On instructions, I am directed to observe that Israel did not, and does not, object to the consensus decision just taken to establish an ad hoc committee on FMCT, but we, of course, reserve our position on the substance of the issues involved. I regret that political elements have gratuitously been voiced in some of the interventions being made at present. I shall refrain. Let me conclude, Mr. President, by offering our felicitations to you on the skilled way you have conducted our proceedings thus far.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): France welcomes the important decision just taken by the Conference on Disarmament. The launching of negotiations on a treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices constitutes a crucial stage in defining a more secure international society. The international non-proliferation regime will benefit thereby. The cut-off treaty will add a global quantitative constraint to the qualitative constraints already established by the CTBT. Once in force, these two treaties will constitute a set of non-discriminatory and, we hope, universal norms which will provide everyone with an assurance that movement towards nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is continuing in the right direction. This eagerly awaited decision crowns several years of patient effort by all those States which, like France, believe in the honest implementation in good faith of the undertakings entered into in 1995 at the time of the renewal and indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as set out in the declaration of principles and objectives.

As you know, since 1996 my country no longer produces fissile material for nuclear weapons. We even took the risk, pending the conclusion of a cut-off treaty, of permanently dismantling the facilities which produce such material. Returning to this forum, you may also recall that after the commencement of nuclear tests in South Asia, my country called on the Conference on 19 May to launch the cut-off negotiations without further delay. That appeal was officially reiterated by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs in Geneva at the 4 June meeting of the P5. Hubert Védrine considered then that the stakes were such as to justify direct involvement by the ministers until such time as negotiations were under way. For a month now, jointly with Australia, France has stepped up efforts to emphasize the urgent need to produce results in accordance with the wish expressed by the United Nations Security Council in resolution 1172. Today's decision is a reward for our efforts. It testifies once again to the serious way in which France intends to discharge its undertakings in the area of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. By adopting today's decision the Conference on Disarmament has taken a fundamental step in the definition of its programme of work. Now we must speedily designate a chairman for the Ad Hoc Committee so that it can meet in good time before the end of this session and establish a process which will enable our work to be continued next year in the best conditions. Yet as has been emphasized by the G.21, our efforts concerning the programme of work are not complete. In particular, we consider that there is still a need to draw the lessons from the work of the Special Coordinators with respect to anti-personnel mines and outer space. It is our firm hope that the Conference on Disarmament will establish as soon as possible ad hoc committees with negotiating mandates to deal with each of these subjects.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Like other colleagues, I also join in welcoming the distinguished Ambassador of Bulgaria, Ambassador Draganov, who has joined us as the CD emerges from its long period of somnolence.

Mr. President, Pakistan is happy that the Conference on Disarmament has been able to adopt a decision to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty on fissile material, based on the Shannon report. This decision has been due, in no small measure, to the dedicated efforts which you have conducted to promote consensus on the decision we have just adopted and the accompanying Presidential statement.

My remarks this afternoon will be more practical rather than poetic in nature, unlike some of the statements of my colleagues earlier.

A fissile material treaty has been a long-standing goal of the international community. Paragraph 50 of the final declaration of SSOD-I called for a ban on the production of fissile material as part of the measures for nuclear disarmament, the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and a time-bound programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons. We continue to adhere firmly to this long-standing international consensus. It is the attempt to deny or compromise this consensus which has delayed the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material treaty.

As the discussions and consultations of the past two weeks have confirmed, there are some fundamental differences among members of the CD on the purpose and scope of the fissile material treaty. A few States - including the five nuclear-weapon States and one self-declared nuclear-weapon State - wish to restrict the proposed ban on fissile materials only to future production. The vast majority of the CD's membership continues to adhere to the long-standing consensus that the fissile material treaty must address the issue of stockpiles of fissile material possessed by some States and, through their progressive and balanced reduction, to promote the goal of nuclear disarmament. The treaty should not be, once again, a measure for nuclear non-proliferation alone.

It is important, therefore, Mr. President, that this Ad Hoc Committee has been established under item 1, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". We regret, however, that this commitment - that this treaty will promote nuclear disarmament - could not be reflected in the Presidential statement which you made following the decision to establish the Ad Hoc Committee.

In view of the nature and purpose of the treaty, my delegation does not agree to the treaty being described as a fissile material cut-off treaty, implying only a halt in future production. We cannot endorse the loose abbreviation - FMCT - in any formal description of the treaty which is to be negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament.

The existence of unequal stockpiles of fissile material in South Asia was always an issue of central importance since it threatened to destabilize the situation of "existential" or "non-weaponized" deterrence between India and

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

Pakistan. This issue has become even more critical in the wake of India's declaration that it is now a nuclear-weapon State and that it will produce and deploy nuclear weapons for what it calls "minimum deterrence". We can therefore only presume that India will transform its large fissile material stocks into nuclear weapons. This will accentuate the threat to stability and security in South Asia. In calculating the balance required to maintain deterrence vis-à-vis India, Pakistan will need to take into account both India's nuclear weapons and fissile material stockpiles. We cannot therefore agree to freeze inequality, especially when this directly threatens our security. It is for this reason that Pakistan had asked for a clarification - before commencing negotiations - about India's nuclear status. Unfortunately, the response that has been given is legalistic rather than realistic. Not even Ambassador Moher's affirmation of Canada's conception of the political ground realities dictated by the NPT somehow sufficed to remove for Pakistan the grim reality of nuclear weapons which our neighbour declares it will possess and deploy. We shall therefore need to factor the "new realities" of South Asia into our negotiations on the fissile materials treaty.

But let me remind our friends that it is not Pakistan which has created, or sought to create, a new paradigm, either for non-proliferation or for nuclear disarmament. Our compulsion is to respond to the direct threats to our security. This is our sovereign right and the duty of our Government, and this right will not be compromised.

A decision on the scope of the treaty will be essential to determine the nature of the treaty and its provisions for verification and compliance. We shall need to proceed step by step in evolving agreement on the fissile materials treaty.

The negotiations we will commence in the Ad Hoc Committee on the fissile materials treaty will be complex, arduous and time-consuming. The statements we have heard this afternoon, for example, from Egypt, Canada, and not least from India, confirm and illustrate the difficulties that lie ahead in our negotiations.

Mr. President, at this stage Pakistan wished to affirm what has been stated by the Group of 21 in the informal consultations. The fissile materials treaty is after all not the highest priority for the Group. As the Coordinator of the G.21 has just stated, the realization of nuclear disarmament enjoys the highest priority in our pantheon of the purposes of the CD. Together with the G.21, Pakistan will continue to seek the early establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate on nuclear disarmament. We have proposed specific measures for nuclear disarmament, including a convention to commit all States to the elimination of nuclear weapons. We hope this will be taken up by the Conference in the near future. We expect that the nuclear-weapon States will be responsive to the desires and hopes of the vast majority of mankind in pursuing nuclear disarmament, especially in this sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament.

Mr. AMAT FORES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on the efforts you have made to ensure the adoption of the decision to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for military purposes. Your experience, your skilful leadership and your own personal contributions have undoubtedly enabled the Conference to achieve a consensus on a matter to which our country attaches vital importance. We also welcome Ambassador Draganov of Bulgaria, who will be with us from today in the course of the work of our Conference, and we wish him success in his work.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate yet again in this forum the traditional position maintained by Cuba, the Group of 21 and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in general. We are referring to the high priority we attach to nuclear disarmament. We are convinced that the world of today offers major opportunities to deal in an effective manner with all matters related to disarmament and international security, as well as to foster a secure world free of weapons of mass destruction. There is no justification, even if there ever was, for maintaining nuclear arsenals, and even less for continuing to modernize them. The time has come to scrap all these weapons once and for all. That is why we attach great importance and await with optimism concrete, positive results stemming from the negotiations in the troika which will be conducive to the establishment, as a matter of priority, of an ad hoc committee to commence negotiations on a phased programme for nuclear disarmament and for the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons on a specific timescale. It is within that very context that Cuba views the negotiations on fissile material, regarding them as a specific matter falling within the broader area of nuclear disarmament. We made that point when we agreed to support the proposal for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons, which was presented by 28 nations from the Group of 21 in document CD/1419. In that proposal, the negotiation and conclusion of a treaty for the prohibition of fissile material for the production of nuclear weapons forms part of the first phase of the programme of action and is one of the measures aimed at reducing the nuclear threat. Nevertheless, on this occasion we have displayed flexibility and a highly constructive attitude. The decision which we have just taken constitutes a concession to our interlocutors. It would have been fairer and more balanced, we feel, if at the same time as establishing an ad hoc committee on fissile material a decision had also been taken to set up an ad hoc committee for nuclear disarmament. It is my hope that that will be taken into account in the near future, and we will continue to emphasize our traditional positions.

Finally, allow me to indicate our expectations for these negotiations. In the course of its work the Ad Hoc Committee must take into account not merely future production of fissile material but also past production, as well as the management of such material. These matters are of particular importance to my delegation. If they are not taken into account we will be talking solely about a non-proliferation measure, which will contribute to perpetuating the unbalanced and dangerous present state of affairs. The proposed treaty on fissile material should constitute a measure of nuclear disarmament and not simply a measure of non-proliferation, and should be a step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Today, in supporting

(Mr. Amat Fores, Cuba)

this decision, Cuba has displayed its support for negotiations with the characteristics I have mentioned, and it will remain faithful to that approach throughout the whole process.

Mr. HAYASHI (Japan): Today, after three years of stalemate, the CD agreed through consensus to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on a fissile material cut-off treaty. As one of the major advocates of an FMCT, my Government wholeheartedly welcomes this development, which came about as a result of the flexibility expressed by all the members of the CD. However, without your numerous consultations and your persistent endeavours urging us towards consensus, Mr. President, the Ad Hoc Committee could not have been established. Your efforts have been indispensable and have made this positive progress possible. In this context, I would like to express my warmest gratitude to you, and on this occasion, I would like to join others in welcoming the new representative of Bulgaria, Ambassador Draganov, to our Conference.

My Government considers an FMCT highly meaningful in the field of nuclear disarmament, and the NPT Review and Extension Conference of 1995 subscribes to this view. Although it is obvious that an FMCT alone cannot lead to the reduction of nuclear warheads, we still believe that it will give positive effect to the enhancement and promotion of nuclear disarmament by capping the nuclear production capabilities of nuclear-weapon States.

At the same time, we believe that an FMCT is invaluable in terms of nuclear non-proliferation because it will halt the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes globally, thereby greatly consolidating and strengthening the non-proliferation regime. And now, with the challenge the NPT regime is currently facing, an FMCT is all the more important.

Thus, an FMCT will serve as an indispensable intermediate step towards the achievement of our ultimate goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons by promoting both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

From this point of view, I fully agree with the Presidential statement, which you have just read, that clearly expresses the significance of the Presidential consultations on agenda item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". While the significance of an FMCT should be emphasized, its conclusion alone is not satisfactory for our work in the CD. Japan firmly believes that the CD should continue its efforts to identify the next appropriate multilateral step after an FMCT. I sincerely hope that these Presidential consultations will result in a concrete and constructive mechanism or measure which will enable us to move forward towards this end.

The Japanese Government welcomes the commencement of negotiations on an FMCT. We also recognize that this marks only the start of our work. Everyone in this room is well aware of the differing views and positions among CD delegations on several highly crucial and basic issues that are inherent in an FMCT, one of which is the question of scope. Though the mandate contained in the Shannon report clearly defines an ad hoc committee on a ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

devices, the issue of existing stocks of fissile materials is too important to be left aside. I am sure that the competence or otherwise of the CD rests more upon how to deal with this issue successfully than upon just agreeing on establishing an ad hoc committee.

In this regard, my delegation has been encouraged by the initiative taken by the United States, the Russian Federation and IAEA. My delegation welcomes and appreciates the recent initiative by the United Kingdom, entitled "Strategic Defence Review", particularly its declaration on the volume and types of fissile materials in its possession.

In addition to the scope, which is rather a political issue, there are numerous technical questions which should be resolved in the course of negotiations. In this connection, I would like to remind CD members of the outcome of the technical seminar held on 10 and 11 May with the participation of highly qualified experts. The summary report of the Chairman is available as document CD/1516.

Mr. ACHENBACH (Germany): Let me first join those who have welcomed the distinguished Ambassador of Bulgaria to this Conference, and I would like especially to express the great satisfaction of my delegation on the ratification of the Ottawa treaty by the Bulgarian Parliament.

It will come as no surprise that Germany greatly welcomes, as all other speakers today, the decision we have just taken on establishing an ad hoc committee on a fissile material cut-off treaty. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, most warmly on this outstanding success of your presidency.

A fissile material cut-off treaty is a long-sought-after goal of the international community. Germany, in particular, has, as is very well known in this Conference, spared no effort to come to this decision, and Germany will spare no effort to bring the FMCT negotiations to a successful outcome. It is our hope that this Conference will quickly take the necessary procedural decisions to allow the earliest possible commencement of intensive negotiations of such a treaty. It is also our hope that these procedural decisions will enable this Conference to continue these negotiations, without delay, at the very outset of next year's session of this Conference.

Today's decision may well be an historic turning point for this Conference. This Ad Hoc Committee will be the first new ad hoc committee established in this Conference since the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments in 1993. Even more, it will be the first ad hoc committee with a truly negotiating mandate since the 1980s. It is our great hope that this historic decision will lend a new impetus to the work of this Conference and will pave the way for further equally important decisions of the Conference in other areas, possibly also on addressing new subjects which have not been topics in this Conference yet.

(Mr. Achenbach, Germany)

In this connection, I would like to assure you, Mr. President, once again of the fullest support of my delegation in your difficult task of conducting the consultations on nuclear disarmament.

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, first of all I would like to congratulate you on taking the Chair, and assure you of my delegation's readiness to cooperate with you. I also welcome Ambassador P. Draganov of Bulgaria, and wish him every success. The Russian delegation wishes to express satisfaction at the important decision just adopted unanimously to create an ad hoc committee for negotiations on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT). For many years Russia has favoured the initiation of negotiations, and we are gratified that this opportunity has not been wasted. We consider it important that the platform for our future work on the FMCT will be the mandate adopted by consensus in the Conference in 1995, which is incorporated in the Conference decision to establish the Ad Hoc Committee. We hope that the future negotiations will lead to the elaboration of a treaty which in particular will contain effective and cost-effective verification machinery making it possible to ensure that no weapons-grade fissile material will be produced in the participating countries. The Russian delegation is ready for this task.

Mr. LI (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, first of all please allow me on behalf of the Chinese delegation to congratulate you, the distinguished representative of Ukraine, on your assumption of the important function of President of the Conference on Disarmament. Ukraine and China have always maintained friendly relations of cooperation. The international community widely appreciates the positive position and action taken by Ukraine on arms control and disarmament. Since your assumption of the presidency you have worked hard to guide the Conference forward, thus revealing your brilliant skills and diplomatic experience. In conducting the consultations on the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on FMCT you took advantage of the opportunities available, gave cautious guidance and thus contributed significantly. I wish also to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Sungar of Turkey, for his diligent efforts and contribution to the CD's work. At the same time I would like to join other speakers in welcoming our new colleague Ambassador Draganov of Bulgaria.

Today, thanks to the collective efforts of all concerned, particularly flexibility shown by some countries, the CD has reached consensus on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on FMCT. My appreciation goes to all concerned for their flexibility and to you, Sir, for the effective effort you made in this connection.

China has always taken a positive approach towards the FMCT. It supports the negotiation and conclusion of a non-discriminatory, multilateral, internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, based on the Shannon report and the mandate it set forth on which all members of the CD agreed in 1995. The future treaty should be fair, just and universal. The

(Mr. Li, China)

establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on FMCT represents another important advance by the CD over the past two years. But it is only the first step on the long road towards the conclusion of an FMCT. The negotiations to come will be complex, strenuous and correspondingly difficult. Various indications suggest that the CD faces not only opportunities but also challenges and tests that must not be underestimated. Along with other members of the CD China is willing to participate positively in the negotiations and work jointly for the early conclusion of a good treaty.

Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands): After so many delegations have spoken, I would like to take the floor only very briefly in order to share our joy and gratitude that we have finally, under your able chairmanship, Mr. President, decided on the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate the fissile material cut-off treaty, on the basis of the Shannon report and the mandate contained therein. My Government is extraordinarily pleased with the achievement of this long-term objective, regarded as the logical next step, after the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

My delegation wants to thank all delegations for their flexibility and their willingness to cooperate and support the decision and the accompanying statement. We particularly thank you, Mr. President, for the able manner in which you have handled this matter. My delegation stands ready to contribute to the negotiations in order to bring about the best results within the shortest time possible. And finally, we would also like to welcome Ambassador Draganov to the Conference on Disarmament. We look forward to our continued cooperation in bringing about the objectives of this Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Would any other delegations like to take the floor at this stage? Since none do, we have come to the end of our agenda and I intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 13 August at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.